



Department of Justice

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2005
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U.S. REACHES AGREEMENT WITH JEWEL FOOD STORES

Washington, D.C. - The Justice Department and the Environmental Protection Agency today announced they have reached an agreement with Jewel Food Stores, Inc. to resolve alleged violations of federal regulations to protect stratospheric ozone.

Under the agreement filed in the federal district court in Chicago, Jewel will take steps that will prevent over 145,000 pounds of future releases of ozone-depleting refrigerants - such as chlorofluorocarbons, known as "CFCs" - that destroy stratospheric or "good" ozone. Jewel will retrofit at least 37 of its supermarkets in and around Chicago with systems that use non-ozone-depleting refrigerants by the year 2007. In addition, the company agreed that, in any new stores built in and around Chicago after the agreement takes effect, it will only install commercial refrigeration units that use an EPA-approved non-ozone-depleting refrigerant. Jewel will also retrofit any unit that has more than three significant leaks in a year in any of its other stores. The company will also pay a civil penalty of \$100,000 for alleged past leaks of ozone-depleting refrigerants.

"Today's agreement demonstrates our continued commitment to the strong enforcement of our nation's environmental laws," said Tom Sansonetti, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "The actions Jewel has agreed to will help protect the ozone layer, ensuring a safer environment for our future generations."

"We commend Jewel for agreeing to make improvements to its refrigeration systems," said Acting EPA Region 5 Administrator Bharat Mathur. "Through these environmental efforts Jewel has demonstrated its willingness to be a good corporate citizen."

Other steps include Jewel's implementation of a company-specific, EPA approved refrigerant management plan to ensure compliance with the regulations governing ozone-depleting refrigerants.

The agreement resolves a complaint alleging that Jewel violated EPA commercial refrigerant leak repair, testing, recordkeeping and reporting regulations. This is EPA's second and largest settlement with a grocery store and the second settlement under the commercial refrigerant leak repair regulations of the Clean Air Act.

When CFC refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, dangerous amounts of cancer-causing ultraviolet rays from the sun strike the earth. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling. The agreement will be subject to a 30-day public comment period.

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